GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:967
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2016
Sampling of Imported Food Consignment
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that food importers and pharmaceutical companies particularly those selling supplements and nutraceuticals have been demanding for fast clearance, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Government proposes to waive off sampling from consignment of general food products at ports and shipyards and other points of entry, if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which a single window clearance is likely to be launched for food importers in the country; and

(d) whether these rules are to be applicable for both importers and exporters in the country, if so, the details thereof and precautionary measures being taken by the Government to ensure non-clearance of adulterated food items under this system?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE)
(a): Yes.

(b): The Government is conscious of the fact that food articles imported into the country have to be safe and conform to the standards specified for a particular product and that the delayed clearance of consignments at ports adds to costs. Keeping these factors in view, the Government of India has evolved a risk based system for faster clearance of imported goods to facilitate ease of doing business. Accordingly, Food Import Clearance System (FICS) of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been integrated with ICEGATE of Customs under the Single Window Project. In this arrangement, the Bill of Entry filed at ICEGATE is seamlessly transferred to the FICS and online clearance is accorded. Further, Food Import Prioritization System (FIPS) has been implemented by the FSSAI on pilot basis for fresh fruits under which risk based sampling of import consignments is done on the basis of compliance history of food item, country of origin and the importer.

(c): Single Window clearance Project is operational since 1st April, 2016.

(d): The procedure referred to in earlier parts of the reply is applicable for import of food under the purview of FSSAI. The imported food consignments are subjected to visual inspection, risk based sampling and testing to ensure that they are in conformity to the standards laid down under Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011. The system in operation currently ensures that no food which does not meet the quality parameters is allowed to be imported into the country.